



Literacy Links

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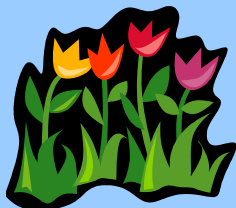
The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for writing include three distinct types of writing. This month, writing narrative texts is the focus of examination.

Spotlight on...

Narrative Writing in the Common Core State Standards

Write your story as it
needs to be written.
Write it honestly, and
tell it as best you can.
I'm not sure that there
are any other rules.
Not ones that matter.

~Neil Gaiman



The third writing standard in the CCSS for ELA focuses on the ability to write narrative texts to develop real or imagined experiences using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. By grade 5, students should be able to write narrative texts that:

- a. Orient the reader by establish a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; and organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- c. Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
- d. Use concrete words and phrases as well as sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

(Continued on page 2)



**I love the freedom that
the narrative form
provides.**

~Sidney Sheldon



**By writing much, one
learns to write well.**

~Robert Southey

In order to learn how to write narrative pieces, the Common Core State Standards expect that students are also learning skills required by other CCSS standards, such as:

- reading literary and informational texts to determine how authors craft narrative texts;
- analyzing the structure of texts to apply to writing;
- engaging in collaborative conversations to develop writing;
- using technology to produce and publish writing;
- adding drawings or other visual displays to clarify ideas;
- demonstrating command of standard English conventions for writing; and
- acquiring and using general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including figurative language, to shape meaning and tone.

The progression of standards for writing narrative texts across the K-12 span can be found at the following link (scroll down this page to locate narrative writing):

http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/ela/documents/ELA_Break-Down/ccss-writing_811.pdf.

Why is learning to write narrative texts important? According to the CCSS (2010), the goal of writing narratives is to convey, “experience, either real or imaginary, and to use time as its deep structure. Narrative writing can be used for many purposes, such as to inform, instruct, persuade, or entertain. In English language arts, students produce narratives that take the form of creative fictional stories, memoirs, anecdotes, and autobiographies. In history/social studies, students write narrative accounts about individuals. They also construct event models of what happened, selecting from their sources only the most relevant information. In science, students write narrative descriptions of the step-by-step procedures they follow in their investigations so that others can replicate their procedures” (CCSS, Appendix A). Additionally, the narrative category does not include all of the possible forms of creative writing, such as many types of poetry. The Standards leave the inclusion and evaluation of other such forms to teacher discretion (CCSS, Appendix A).

As has been noted previously, the CCSS expect strong integration between students’ study of literary and informational texts and the application of this knowledge to their writing. Narrative writing can be supported through this connection, particularly through the use of mentor and author text studies in which students focus on particular narrative techniques utilized by authors.

Check out the instructional ideas and texts suggested below for more resources related to writing narratives.



If you read good books, when you write, good books will come out of you.

~Natalie Goldberg



It is better to write a bad first draft than to write no first draft at all.

~Will Shetterly

Online Instructional Resources...

The online links listed below offer resources related to writing narrative text.

Read-Write-Think

This website, sponsored by the International Reading Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, and Verizon, houses a number of instructional resources related to narrative writing. Several resources to check out include:

Day in the Life Narratives

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/calendar-activities/smithsonian-institution-founded-1846-20282.html>

Character Trading Cards

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/planning-story-characters-using-932.html?tab=1#tabs>

Autobiographies

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/telling-story-about-young-421.html>

Writing Fix

A product of the North Nevada Writing Project, Writing Fix is a web-based collection of writing resources. The following link takes you to the section of the website that focuses on narrative writing:

<http://writingfix.com/genres/narrative.htm>

Reading Rockets

This website contains a wealth of articles, video clips, and lesson ideas devoted to writing narrative texts, helpful to both teachers and parents.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/atoz/writing/>

Of particular interest is an article entitled ***“Story Skeletons: Teaching Text Structure with Picture Books”*** by Shutta Crum in which a variety of common narrative text structures are featured along with mentor texts to support their study. This article can be accessed directly at:

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/22242/>.



UPCOMING EVENTS

K-12 Summer Literacy Institute 2012

**Common
Understanding
of Core
Learning
Transition Planning
for the Common
Core State
Standards**

**August 20-22, 2012
Augusta Civic
Center**

Registration info at:
<http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/ela/professionaldevelopment.html#events>

Instructional Ideas....

The following instructional ideas help support the teaching of narrative writing.

Comic Strips (Lisa Storm Fink)

A strong plot is a basic requirement of any narrative. Students are sometimes confused, however, by the difference between a series of events that happen in a story and the plot elements, or the events that are significant to the story. In this lesson, students select a topic for a personal narrative and then do the prewriting in comic-strip format to reinforce the plot structure. Finally, they write their own original narratives based on the comic strip prewriting activity, keeping the elements of narrative writing in mind. The lesson uses a version of "The Three Little Pigs" fairy tale to demonstrate the literary element; however, any picture book with a strong plot would work for this lesson (Read-Write-Think Website). All of the details and resources needed for this lesson can be accessed at: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/comics-classroom-introduction-narrative-223.html?tab=1#tabs>

Developing Character Voice (Sarah Starr)

Teaching your students to appreciate voice is a key part of helping them develop a distinctive voice in their own prose. In this lesson, students listen to different versions of familiar stories, learning to identify what makes a strong voice. In *Once Upon a Fairy Tale*, the characters retell a familiar tale from their own perspectives, imparting motivation that works in a contemporary context. Students compare this retelling with a traditional version of the story in order to understand the value of a strong voice in narrative writing. They apply what they have learned in two writing activities, one creating a story with an online Fractured Fairy Tales tool, and the other writing a story or essay on a self-selected topic (Read-Write-Think Website). Details and resources related to this lesson can be accessed at: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/this-story-encouraging-students-1015.html>



ASCD Spring Conference

*Teaching
Persuasive
Writing
With Karen
Caine*

**Ramada Inn
Lewiston
April 30, 2012**

**Info at:
www.maineascd.org**



Summary of Professional Texts...

The following texts offer resources to support narrative writing

[Live Writing: Breathing Life Into Your Words](#) by Ralph Fletcher
(HarperCollins, 1999, ISBN #: 0380797011)

Although Ralph Fletcher deliberately wrote this text for students, it is a powerful read for teachers, and offers plenty of insights about how to guide students' writing. Fletcher says, "This book is based on the simple idea that every writer has a "tool box." Instead of awls and hammers, a writer's toolbox contains words, imagination, a love of books, a sense of story, and ideas for how to make the writing live and breathe. I wrote this book to give you some practical strategies to throw into your toolbox. I hope you'll try them, because these are ideas that can make you a better writer." (Ralph Fletcher). Teachers may find this text a useful read aloud for students.

[Craft Lessons, 2nd Edition](#) by Ralph Fletcher and Joanne Portalupi
(Stenhouse, 2007, ISBN #: 1571107061)

"Craft is the cauldron in which the writing gets forged. Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi argue that too often we concentrate on the beginning and ending of the writing process - conceiving and correcting - while leaving students on their own to make a thousand critical decisions in their writing about crafting leads, voice, structure, supporting detail, setting, mood, and character. What elements of craft can we teach student writers, and at what age are they ready to learn them? This book answers both questions. Craft Lessons is the practical text for the over-scheduled writing teacher who wants to give students fresh challenges for their writing but doesn't have time to pore over dozens of trade books to do so." (Amazon Review).

[Writing Sense: Integrated Reading And Writing Lessons for English Language Learners](#) by Juli Kendall and Outey Khuon
(Stenhouse, 2006, ISBN #: 1571104429).

Writing is all about making meaning. The prospect of teaching writing to a classroom full of students—some who speak English and some who don't, can be overwhelming. When students learning English are at different levels, the task is even more challenging. Juli Kendall and Outey Khuon experimented with Ellin Keene's "Thinking Strategies Used by Proficient Learners" and found that by integrating writing and reading instruction their English language learners become stronger writers.

Writing Sense outlines the classroom conditions necessary for successful writing instruction with English language learners, whether in writing workshop and/or small-group instruction. It includes 68 classroom-tested lessons for grades K–8 that show kids at all levels of language acquisition how to make connections, ask questions, visualize (make mental images), infer, determine importance, synthesize, monitor meaning and comprehension, and use fix-up strategies (Amazon Review).

University of Maine

Notebook Savvy: Taking a Close Look Inside the Reading and Writing Notebooks

Presented by **Aimee
Buckner**

The Lovett School,
Atlanta, GA

May 10, 2012, 9:00-3:00
p.m.

Wells Conference Center
University of Maine,
Orono

Contact:
Amy.Cates@umit.maine.edu

Maine Partnership for Comprehensive Literacy

*Summer Conference
with Linda Dorn*

August 6-8, 2012
Wells Conference
Center
University of Maine

For more info contact
amy.cates@umit.maine.edu

Children's Literature...

Mentor Texts for Narrative Writing

In Enzo's Splendid Gardens

By Patricia Polacco

(Philomel, 1997, ISBN # 0399231072)

"As she has so many times before, Patricia Polacco has drawn on her inspiration for an appealing picture book from a family story; this time, it's what might have happened at her bearded husband Enzo's Italian garden restaurant. The rhyming text begins: "This is the bee that stopped on a tree in Enzo's splendid gardens." A riotous chain of events is set into motion, including broken dishes, smashed deserts, and a cat tangled in spaghetti--all in Enzo's fancy outdoor eatery" (Julie Corsaro *for Booklist*).

Every Autumn Comes the Bear

By

(Puffin Books, 1996, ISBN # 0698114051)

"Each autumn, just before the onset of winter, a bear shows up in the rugged woodland behind a family farm. Via his simple, linear text and large-format watercolor paintings, author/illustrator Jim Arnosky depicts the change of seasons and the ritual of hibernation in "a beautiful, imaginative, and informative approach to natural history for the nursery set" (Booklist).

Content Area Strategy...

RAFT

"The more often students write, the more proficient they become as writers. RAFT is a writing strategy that helps students understand their role as a writer and how to effectively communicate their ideas and mission clearly so that the reader can easily understand everything written" (Simon for NCTE). By using this strategy, teachers encourage students to write creatively, to consider a topic from a different perspective, and to gain practice writing for different audiences (Reading Rockets).

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Literacy Across the Curriculum: A Summer Course for Teachers at a Maine Lighthouse

This professional learning experience will utilize Burnt Island's (located off the coast of Boothbay Harbor) ecosystems and historic buildings as vehicles to deliver literacy strategies. Whether you are an artist, scientist, mathematician, writer, historian, or any combination thereof, the goal of this course is to provide you with the necessary tools to implement literacy strategies in your classroom.

Presented by the Maine Department of Marine Resources

For more information, visit www.maine.gov/dmr/burntisland/courses/index.htm or call Elaine Jones at (207) 592-1839.

Based on the work of Havens and Valdes (2004) in Project CRISS (see citation below), the RAFT acronym stands for **Role**, **Audience**, **Format**, and **Topic**. Students learn to respond to writing prompts that require them to think about various perspectives:

Role of the Writer: Who are you as the writer? A movie star? The President? A plant?

Audience: To whom are you writing? A senator? Yourself? A company?

Format: In what format are you writing? A diary entry? A newspaper? A love letter?

Topic: What are you writing about?

More detailed directions for using RAFT and ideas for its application across curriculum areas can be found at the following web links:

Reading Rockets: <http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/raft/>

Read, Write, Think: <http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/using-raft-writing-strategy-30625.html>

Santa, C., Havens, L., & Valdes, B. (2004). *Project CRISS: Creating Independence through Student-owned Strategies*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt.

News from Maine's English Language Arts Team...

Common Understanding of Core Learning: Transition Planning for the Common Core State Standards

Featuring Kylene Beers and Bob Probst

**August 20, 21, and 22
Augusta Civic Center**

The Maine Department of Education's ELA Division is pleased to be partnering with MADSEC and USM to sponsor this K-12 Summer Institute. Districts and/or schools are invited to send teams to this event for three days of exploring strategies for teaching our ELA standards and for support in developing or advancing CCSS transition plans. Space will be limited so start thinking about who should be on your team.

For more information, go to:
<http://www.maine.gov/education/lres/ela/professionaldevelopment.html#events>

We still want your suggestions! As you peruse the monthly editions of *Literacy Links*, you might have topic ideas for the spotlight, instructional strategy, children's literature, professional text, or web site resource sections. We'd love to hear your suggestions. Please email them to: Leeann.Larsen@maine.gov.



For additional information about any of the items in this newsletter or to sign up to receive this e-newsletter, please email Leeann.Larsen@maine.gov

Click here to view back editions of *Literacy Links*
<http://www.maine.gov/education/rf/newsletters/index.html>

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